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How to Be Happy [00804] Though Married

By

MADISON C. PETERS

Author of "Justice to the Jew", "The Jews Who Stood By Washington", "After Death—What?", "Sermons That Won the Masses", etc.

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How to be
Happy though
Married



PREFACE.

There was published some years ago an English book by a "Graduate of the University of Matrimony", bearing the alarmingly suggestive title "How to be Happy Though Married", a headliner not original with the author. An old English preacher named Skelton, first used it as a title for a sermon. The startling theme inculcates the important and frequently forgotten truth that domestic happiness does not come as a matter of course, but like everything else worth having, has to be worked for.

The passages published in this booklet are picked at random from the author's lecture on the subject and are intended to advertise that lecture, which in its entirety would make quite a book.

Lecture committees will find this subject one which will attract attention, and the complete lecture as given before popular audiences furnishes refined entertainment, while doing a vast amount of good. For terms and dates address,

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How to be Happy though Married

There are three times as many divorces in the United States, with one hundred millions of people, as there are in all Europe with more than four hundred millions. Does this mean that there is less matrimonial felicity among us than in Europe?

The average European woman thinks that man may impose upon her by divine right. In many parts of Europe women are nothing more than beasts of burden,

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and are ruled in the spirit of the dark ages. Denied education, and completely subordinated to her husband, woman lives in fear of and in subjection to her lord and master.

Our advancing civilization has enlarged woman's ideas, and with a better comprehension of her nature and rights, the average American woman would rather make her own way in the world than live a lie with a man for support.

Statistics of divorce represent only the apparent fact, as this is the age of expression rather than suppression.

A more intelligent recognition of disease, and the modern difference in diagnosis might lead to the false impression that there were more diseases to-day than a thousand years ago. The fact is, our modern life not only teems with specialists, but their discoveries belong to the morning papers, and it may be that the increasing difficulties in the marriage relation to-day are only apparent, the enlightened surgery of divorce is calling attention to the distresses of domesticity.

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Marriage is a bitter-sweet, with the sweet predominating, if the proper conditions are observed.

Married life is not a hill Olympus, wholly clear, without clouds; under the best conditions it is not all roses and honeymoon. Thorns will be found concealed beneath the rose leaves and some bitter ingredients will get mixed with the sweet in the cup of its joy.

Gladstone, Disraeli and Bismarck, who were for forty years the controlling powers in European politics, have gone on record as owing their successes to their wives.

Whether a man shall be made or marred in marriage, depends altogether upon the choice he makes.

Solomon, whose matrimonial experience was rather multitudinous, said: "A prudent wife is from the Lord," leaving us to infer where an imprudent one must come from.

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All matches are not made in heaven, and from the smell of some matches you can guess where they must have been made.

Are you looking for an angel? You are on a fool's errand. There are none unpledged. How would you look alongside of an angel?

Adam and Eve were the only perfect pair the world ever saw—and they raised Cain!

What sort of a woman should a man marry?

That depends upon what you want her for—a comrade or a cook. An Irishman said: "A wife's a comfortable thing, she's there if you want her, and she's there if you don't want her." As she is likely to be there whether wanted or not, for a good while, you should choose as you would a suit of clothes—for qualities that will wear.

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If you must marry a fool, marry a good looking one. The advantage of selecting a fool is that she will be less likely to see your defects and consequently more apt to choose you.

He who marries for beauty alone is as silly as the man who bought a house because he liked the flowers in the front yard.

A beautiful woman pleases the eye, a good woman wins the heart; the one is a jewel, the other a treasure.

Often domestic duties and the cares of motherhood exclude women from society until they become indifferent to its demands and their loss of interest in outside things is often followed by inattention to their person, and if women could look into the hearts of men they would discover that much of the dissatisfaction with wives results from indifference to their personal appearance.

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The love of beauty belongs to woman. A sloven is an abomination. Dress as well as you can afford. If you are young you add to your charms by varying your attire and when you are no longer young adopt any kind of sensible, appropriate dress, which will charm away that melancholy spectre which throws its shadows on the looking glass—old age.

The most common method employed in increasing and preserving beauty in woman is a liberal use of paint, powder and pencil, but the beauty which is only surface deep is likely to prove as evanescent as the passing cloud.

The highest style of beauty found in the human form is lighted up by the intelligence within; while men admire the chiseled lines and shapely features of the countenance, the contour of figure and finished form, the radiance of the latter flashes and is gone, while the former, though lacking certain regularity of outline, delicacy and softness, the superior

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flow of sympathy and a noble heart light up the homely features with regal beauty as the light that plays in fitful coruscations along the northern sky, coming and going, but never still.

However shaggy the brows, oblique the eyes, ominously longitudinal the nose and straggling the mouth, you may possess an inward beauty, that perishes not, which will flash out in the eye, glow in the face, tune the voice and wreath the countenance in charms.

To improve your looks cultivate a sweet disposition. Keep the lines out of your face by keeping the wrinkles out of your soul. Remember that the brightest light worn by the bluest eyes will grow dim, the sweetest blush on fairest cheek will fade, the deepest gloss will vanish from curl and braid and the loveliest sunbeam die in the waving hair.

The sunny disposition that laughs at care prolongs life—it keeps people in good spirits and therefore young.

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Fun is nature's great doctor, the sap of the brain, the magic quality which cheats poverty of its sting, robs misfortune of its bitterness and women who are most liable to morbid moods most need the agency of wit and humor when the pressure which a vivid feeling of life's ills imposes upon the spirit.

The hearty good laugh is the safety valve through which all the noxious vapors that might poison the mind can escape in an explosion of merriment.

Richard Grant White, John Kendrick Bangs and other writers have declared that women have no sense of humor. Madame de Stael's wit banished her from Napoleon's court and French women thought it safer to keep their wit in check. Women were shy in the "good old times" about being witty as the woman of wit generally lost her head. The girl whom Sydney Smith accused of making an indecent display of intellect was reminded by her mother that with such

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mental activities she would never get a husband.

Yet the witty sayings of great women have come down to us. A diplomat sitting between Madame de Stael and Madame Recamier, said: "Here I am between wit and beauty."

"Yes," quickly retorted Madame de Stael, "without possessing either."

Lady Montague said the only thing that reconciled her to being a woman was that she should never have to marry one.

A supercilious lawyer, cross-examining a young lady whose testimony was likely to result unfavorable to his client, inquired:

"You are married, I believe?"

"No, sir."

"Only wish to be?"

"Really I don't know, would you advise such a step?"

"Oh, certainly; I am a married man myself."

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“Is it possible! I never would have thought it. Is your wife deaf or blind?”

Helen, Rufus Choate’s brilliant daughter, made the remark, quoted without credit, by Ralph Waldo Emerson: “To a woman, the consciousness of being well dressed gives a sense of tranquility which religion fails to bestow.” So also the description of a modern reception, “Giggle, gabble, gobble and git,” attributed to Oliver Wendell Holmes, was made by a woman of Philadelphia.

Marry a woman who knows how to “look well after the ways of her household.” Young women think they must not be troubled with such common-places as house-keeping and home-making, but the newly married won’t be long within their own doors before they find that something more than tender sentiment is needed to make their home life a success.

I know a woman who kept house for nine years before she found out her stove had dampers.

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Eighty-seven per cent of the girls in the High Schools of our Republic are studying the dead languages—studying, not learning them. And I am glad of it. I never saw a woman yet, who could not talk enough for me in one live language, if she got a fair start.

Only three per cent of the High School girls are studying domestic science. I would like to put *bake-ology*, *boil-ology*, *make-ology*, *stitch-ology* and *mend-ology* in the curriculum of every High School throughout the land.

Unless parents can give their daughter a fortune when she marries, they perpetrate a fraud upon the young man, if by her lack of domestic training they make her unfit for the position of wife in the home of the young man who has to make his way in the world.

The support of the extravagant, dawdling, dependent, incompetent, pleasure-seeking, parasitic, good-for-nothing women

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constitutes the heaviest burden of modern life.

Look at our married men, racing for riches, seldom off on a vacation, and for what? For vulgar display—great houses—so many houses that they have no home—sumptuous furnishings, luxurious limousines, an opera box—these are among the things innumerable that seem to constitute for the mass of American women a perfect Paradise—in prospect only; for when the Eden is gained the hot breath of a simoon has withered the verdure and wilted the flowers, dried up the fountain and slain the singing birds. As the expense of married life increased the comfort grew less, and it may be a scandalous thing to say, but the scandal of the fact is so much greater than the scandal of confessing it, that I will risk criticism for the statement of the fact—the domestic life of this country is in an appalling condition!

But how about the man, with whom you may be happy when married?

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Any woman of fair looks and ordinary sense can marry some sort of a man.

If you take a husband just for the sake of having one, you may find him a mortifying trophy and an inconvenient piece of property.

The Bible never said that it was not good for woman to be alone, because God knew many women would be better off alone.

Fortunately parents are beginning to acknowledge the duty of having employments taught their daughters which can save them from marrying merely for a living.

Nothing causes so many mischievous marriages as making "old maid" a term of reproach. Many of the brightest, best and most interesting women in every community are so much absorbed in the serious business of life that they regard husbands as altogether unnecessary inconveniences.

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The most tiresome way of making a living is a marriage without love.

Cupid having grown old has changed his name to cupidity.

The mercantile estimate of marriage is becoming so common that I should not be surprised to see the hymeneal market lists chronicled with the prices current in the Stock Exchange.

If matrimony is a matter of money with you, the older and uglier the man is the better, for nothing should come between you and your golden calf.

Beware of the lazy, shiftless fellow, who lives off the earnings of his father until he can find a girl who is fool enough to marry him and will then live off her father!

Poets may sing of the sweets of poverty, but practically it is a painful thing to be poor and no man is justified in expecting

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you to consent to be married until he can show you that he has counted the cost.

Marry a man nearly your age. A father said to his daughter: "I don't want you to throw yourself away on a foolish young fellow. How would a nice, sober, settled man of 50 suit you?" The daughter very sensibly replied: "Father, I would rather have two at 25."

"Like cures like" may work medicinally, but when it comes to temper contrasts work better. The man without spirit is no good, but a man who lets his spirit control him instead of controlling his spirit, will give you trouble.

Don't marry a man to mend him or reform him—if he were not deformed he would not need to be reformed.

If a man will not reform to please his sweetheart, he will never do so to please his wife.

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Women hope that their influence will be greater after marriage and too often find with breaking hearts that it is less. The martyr's spirit seldom brings the martyr's reward.

If the possession of your love and the hope that you may become his is not enough to reform him, there is little probability that he will turn from his dissipation after you have surrendered your liberty to him.

Silly young women imagine a little wickedness is a sort of spice in a young man's life. Mark my words, you will find those habits after the wedding day to be anything but pleasant spice.

The trouble with bad habits is that they are more likely to wear in than wear out.

Love is not only blind, but deaf and dumb, in the case of the young woman who marries a man to mend him and reform him.

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The risks are great enough for any woman when she marries a man who does not need any reforming.

If I could gather into my lips the language of angels and consult cherubim and seraphim on forms of forceful speech, I could not describe the deep wretchedness of the drunkard's wife.

The most terrible punishment spoken of in antiquity was that devised by Mezentius, who sometimes put a person to death by chaining him to a corpse face to face, the putrefaction of which killed the living man. The drunkard's wife is chained in this way to a loathesome horror, chained with no hope of release, save that which the grave may bring to one or the other or to both.

Tamerlane asked for 160,000 skulls with which to build a pyramid, but if the bones of the crushed wives could be piled up, it would make a pyramid blushing to the skies. And when these inebriate hus-

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bands are fathers, as most of them are, it is impossible to frame a statement of consequences that will give an idea of the enormity—sending out into the world, victims of this Promethean vulture—children, hideous caricatures of the loving God, reeling through life, insane, imbecile, diseased and depraved.

Our trouble is that anything which wears pantaloons can get married to anything which wears skirts and wedding vows are made with no thought of future generations.

It was once an article of belief that disease was an act of Providence and one of James Watts's hymns, has the lines:

"Diseases are thy servants, Lord;
They come at Thy command."

But we are learning that disease is an evil of human production, that degeneracy is not an act of Providence, but the result of marriages that should never have been contracted.

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There will be fewer insane, fewer drunkards, fewer degenerates, less disease, longer life and better stock, when we pay more attention to the proper mating of human beings.

We should at least be as much concerned about the breed of men and women as we are about the breed of horses and swine.

That the qualities of parents may be transmitted is an admitted fact. Sir Walter Scott's mother was a lover of poetry and painting. Byron's worst enemy was his mother; she was proud and ill-tempered. The mothers of Patrick Henry, Daniel Webster and Henry Clay were distinguished for their superior conversational powers. Napoleon's mother was a heroine who could look in the face of physical danger without winking. The mother of the Wesleys was distinguished for her executive ability, so that she has been called "the mother of Methodism." Edwin Booth came from a family of act-

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ors and Henry Ward Beecher sprang from a family of preachers.

We moralize after marriage. "Change the divorce laws," reformers cry. Let us have sensible, moral and uniform divorce laws, but proper marriage is the only cure for the divorce evil. Let marriage certificates give place to marriage diplomas. Certificates can be bought, diplomas must be earned. What God has tried by nature to keep apart, let no man put together, if he does let man put it asunder.

I like the Jewish way of making announcement of engagements in the daily papers. It is a challenge to inquire. Haste is making sad havoc in our American life. A reasonable waiting period between the engagement and marriage may often prevent ill-starred unions.

Marriages which fail are usually entered upon rashly and irreverently, its sanctities and obligations, its possibilities

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and perils not considered and those who seek relief are usually paying the penalties of haste.

You are not married on your wedding day—then you just begin to be married.

Don't imagine that because you have won each other you need no longer be affectionate.

Carry over into the wedded life the refinement of manner that characterized your wooing days.

Don't get mad both at the same time—take turn about.

Stand punctiliously on your rights and you will have a Waterloo with no Blucher coming up at nightfall to decide the conflict.

Once in a while let your husband have the last word—it will please him and be no loss to you.

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Be reasonable. Reasonable women are rare. Be rare.

Let your husband feel that you think (even though your mind has to work overtime) that he is a good one—it will be a strong stimulus to his being so. The loss of the reputation may lead him to abandon the reality.

Never speak to anyone outside of one another's faults, not even to your minister or your doctor—they have troubles enough of their own.

Matrimonial meddlers, everlasting snoops, they would not surprise me if on the Resurrection Day they got out of the wrong grave.

If women spent as much time making cages after marriage as they did spreading nets before marriage, they would keep that dear charmer—an affinity—away.

Husband and wife are one, but it is a

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parody on unity if each wants to be that one.

Whatever may be your husband's business, learn enough about it to listen to him with interest when he speaks to you of it and give him a sensible opinion if he asks it.

Many a failure would have been avoided if men had consulted with their wives.

The word wife means weaver and wives either weave men's fortunes, or, like moths, simply feed upon them.

Home is the school of human virtue, the safety valve of business life, the monarch of civilization. Make your home a cabinet room, where all the affairs of the household and all the matters of business come under comparison and advisal.

A wife will often see what is right and frequently do it before her husband has finished his deliberations.

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Tell your wife how much money you have, no honorable woman will want to spend more than can be afforded.

Pay as you go—if you can't pay, don't go.

Love is a wife's only wages. Don't scrimp in your pay.

Tell your wife that you love her—you may have to lie about it for a fresh start, but say it and keep on saying it until you believe it, and then keep on believing it until you live it. Your wife may have ceased to expect it, but surprise her. She has a right to some expression of your appreciation for her unselfish devotion to your interests.

Taffy is better than epitaphy. A rose strewn on life's path while weary feet are painfully walking over it is more than wreaths for the dead.

Look to the littles! Estrangements are

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rarely the work of one day or caused by one offense. They are growths. The little rift within the lute makes the music mute.

As the sunbeam is composed of millions of minute rays, so the home life must be constituted of little tendernesses, kind looks, sweet laughter, gentle words, loving counsels, and soon it will be found that kindness will spring up on every side, displacing incompatibility of temper and irreconcilability of spirit, even as we have seen sweet violets and beautiful primroses dispelling the gloom of the gray sea rocks.

Make home everything. Men running day by day against this lightning-footed twentieth century, harassed by its cares and perplexed by its quietudes, yearn for the repose of home, where the mind can be at rest, the heart's turmoil become quiet and the spirits bask in the peaceful delights of domestic love.

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Busy men become weary of the dull prose of life and long for poetry. Happy is the man who can find that poetry at home.

A man as a rule stays most where he likes it best. If a man likes any other place better than his own home, look out for breakers!

Make home so pleasant that whenever your husband steps out of domestic life in search of happiness he will come back disappointed. Let him feel that one day passed under his own roof is worth a thousand in any other place. There let warm greetings come from appreciative hearts, fond glances from bright eyes, little arrangements for his comfort that silently tell of thoughtful love and unconsciously force him into an easy chair and make him spend the evening at home because he can't help it.



